

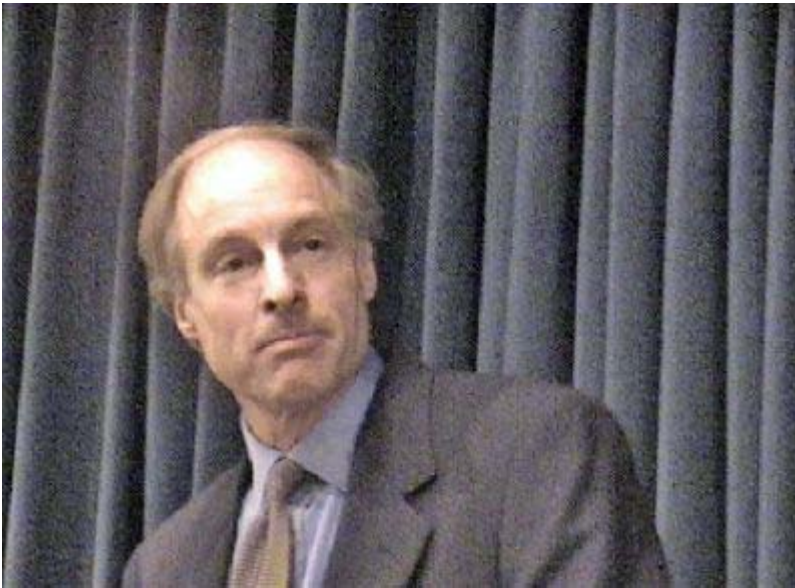


Human Rights Experts: "Israel Committed War Crimes!"

On Sept. 27, 2006, two leading experts on Human Rights spoke at the Palestine Center, in Washington, D.C. Curt Goering of Amnesty International, said Israel's massive bombing campaign in Lebanon, including dropping more than a million cluster bombs, was a "war crime." His group is pressing the UN for a full inquiry. Joe Stork of Human Rights Watch called the Israelis' destruction of Gaza's only electric power generating plant a "war crime."

Author
 William Hughes
Date Created
 01 Oct 2006
More details...

[Click on image for a larger version](#)



"The evil that men do lives after them." - William Shakespeare

Washington, D.C. On September 27, 2006, a capacity audience, at the Palestine Center, heard from Curt Goering, Senior Deputy Executive Director of Amnesty International, USA, (AI), and Joe Stork, Deputy Director of Human Rights Watch, Middle East and North Africa Division (HRW). They are internationally recognized experts in the important field of Human Rights. They recounted, in chilling terms, their experiences gathering evidence to assess the enormous impact of the massive violence inflicted recently on the civilian population in Gaza, and also in Lebanon during the 33-day war in that country inflicted by the Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF). They concluded that the IOF had committed "war crimes" in both military operations. The program was appropriately entitled, "Destruction and Violations: Gaza, Lebanon and Israel." (1)

Mr. Goering, who had just returned from Lebanon, spoke first. He said: This is a subject for which "both our groups have been criticized very heavily, pilloried, I would say in the press and among others...The lashings have been real, but I guess that is what you expect in this field." He explained the methodology that AI used in gathering its substantial evidence and added, "During the war in Lebanon, we had a delegation in there almost from the day it began. Many of the homes we saw were destroyed fully or partially. One of the major issues that we hadn't fully understood until that time...was the extent of the contamination by the dropping of hundreds of thousands of cluster bombs...which were littering the streets, the roads, houses, on balconies, front gardens, orchards, in villages...everywhere. You had to be careful not to step on them. The numbers of these unexploded munitions are huge...Even according to Israeli army officials, there may have been more than a million [of them] launched... (2) The people hurt the most were the poorest...That issue [the de-mining of the cluster bombs] is an ongoing catastrophe."

"Most of this happened," Mr. Goering emphasized, "according to the UN, [because] about 90 percent of the cluster bombs were dropped or launched in the last 72 hours before the ceasefire was agreed to. And, this raised, in particular, the question: 'What military purpose could that have served after everyone knew negotiations were going on?' Everyone supposed there was going to be a ceasefire in just a matter of days. And yet...this barrage, this onslaught against entire villages, not only in the south of Lebanon, but in the north as well." The Prime Minister of Israel, who planned and approved

the blitzkrieg-like war in Lebanon, and the disputed military strategies, is Ehud Olmert, an extreme Far Rightist. He belongs to the Likud Party.

On August 23, 2006, AI issued a report detailing Israeli wrongdoing during the 33-day war in Lebanon. It called for a UN inquiry as to whether Israel [and Hizbollah] had violated "international humanitarian law." (3) Mr. Goering underscored that with respect to its findings against Hizbollah: "I don't want to imply that there was any equality to the scale and scope, there isn't. Clearly, it was a disproportionate response on the Israeli side." He added, "When you take into account the kind of documentation...

the destruction of the civilian infrastructures...the roads, hospitals, the 30,000 homes, apartment buildings, shops destroyed...the pattern as to what had happened...in Lebanon...we concluded that Israel's attack on civilians was deliberate...and not a byproduct of pursuing legitimate military objectives...We [also] concluded that both sides had committed 'war crimes.' If the UN reaches similar conclusions as to our [findings], we would be pushing for individuals to be identified and held criminally responsible."

Mr. Stork began his presentation by saying that HRW basically agreed with AI's finding regarding Israel's culpability in Lebanon. He cited a report by HRW, "Fatal Strikes," as part of his group's documentation. (4) He also referred to the "notorious attack on Qana" by the IOF, in his remarks. Mr. Stork said that the pattern of attacks on civilians by the IOF, in Lebanon, "pointed to a level of intentionality that...raised...the question of whether these attacks, in fact, constituted 'war crimes.'" He had just recently spent several weeks in the Gaza Strip in July and August.

Moving on the subject of Occupied Gaza, Mr. Stork expounded on how the IOF had a policy, dating back to April, 2006, before the capture of the Israeli soldier, that an artillery shell wouldn't be fired and aimed within "100 meters of a civilian structure." Mr. Stork added that the policy used to be "300 meters!" In terms of artillery shelling and other forms of military initiatives by the IOF, he said: "Definitely, [there was] a much lesser regard clearly for the civilian consequences of those actions" by the IOF. Mr. Stork conceded that Israel does have "legitimate" security needs. But, he said that its bombing of the "one electric power generating station in Gaza," which supplies 43 percent of the electricity, (and in many cases is needed to pump the water from underground), to the residences, is in his opinion, and the opinion of an Israeli Human Rights group, "a war crime." He also condemned Israel's extensive closure actions as "collective punishment." Mr. Stork said it is utilized as "a pressure point on the Palestinians" to coerce their government. (5)

For anyone who has followed Israeli wrongdoings over the years, like myself, none of the above is surprising. What is scandalous, however, is that there is never any accountability! Israel continues, as Palestinian-American activist, Noura Erakat, put it, to get away with "its murders." (6) Few of us will ever forget how the Israelis slaughtered 34 Americans on the USS Liberty; bulldozed to death, in Occupied Rafah, Olympia, WA's peace and justice activist, Rachel Corrie; buried Palestinians alive at Jenin, including a man in a wheelchair; shot to death, also at Jenin, a UN refugee worker, Ian Hook, age 54, a British citizen; the IOF supposedly mistaken Mr. Hook's cell phone for a weapon; massacred not once, but twice, civilians, many of them women and children at Qana in Lebanon; shot dead, without just cause, a young British cameraman James Miller, with the scene of the crime again being Occupied Rafah; used a precision bomb to kill four UN peacekeepers in southern Lebanon at Khiam, last July; and finally, a vicious slaying that revealed more to me about the sick mentality of the extremist militant Zionist mindset, then any other in recent memory. I'm referring to an unarmed 13-year old Palestinian girl, Iman al-Hams, who was shot to death with 17 bullets by a soldier of the IOF. He was later cleared of any wrongdoing. (7)

In summation, when will the American people say: Enough is enough? It is long past the time for individuals of conscience in this country to demand that our government end the annual billion dollars-plus subsidies to Israel's War, Death and Occupation Machine. How many Harvard Studies (8) and Human Rights Reports on Palestine and Lebanon do we need to read before taking the action that is necessary to do what is right, just and decent in the Middle East? I'm convinced that if we don't get a handle on this expansionist Zionist Israel problem, it will spell more horror stories for the peoples of that area, (including the Israelis), lead to WWII, and eventually the demise of the American Republic! (9)

Notes:

1. For video excerpts of the presentations of Messrs Goering and Stork, at the Palestine Center, please go here and look under the "Favorites" category:
www.youtube.com/profile
2. www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/761781.html and
www.lewrockwell.com/engelhardt/engelhardt215.html
3. web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGMDE180072006
4. hrw.org/reports/2006/lebanon0806/
5. baltimore.indymedia.org/newswire/display/13013/index.php
6. www.americanchronicle.com/articles/viewArticle.asp and a video of Ms. Noura Erakat, at a State Department protest, is located here: www.youtube.com/watch
7. en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iman_al-Hams and

www.pchrgaza.org/

8.ksgnotes1.harvard.edu/Research/wpaper.nsf/rwp/RWP06-011/%24File/rwp_06_011_walt.pdf

9.

usa.mediamonitors.net/content/view/full/32357

© William Hughes 2006.

William Hughes is the author of "Saying 'No' to the War Party" (IUniverse, Inc.). He can be reached at [liahughes \(at\) comcast.net](mailto:liahughes@comcast.net).

Comments

Re: Human Rights Experts: "Israel Committed War Crimes!"

by **Indeed it will**

[Reply to this comment](#)

Current rating: C

02 Oct 2006

It is time for all people of conscience to speak up.

The Bush(🇺🇸)-Anglo-European-Zionist policy of Ariel Sharon, has put everyone in jeopardy and created unspeakable war crimes.

It has forced the USA, Kazaghztan, and Australia into a dictatorship.

Zionists continue to spread intentional neocon slaughter, and ruin the rule of law.

Michael Chertoff is a war-criminal.

This can all be solved if we speak out, and arrest those neocons who have gone too far.

Blackmail is no answer anymore. Stand up with Europe, and the rest to this lie.

Try the Zionist war criminals and restore Israel to its original borders- so at last everyone, muslims, hebrews included....

Can begin a roadmap to lasting peace and sharing of resources. It is the only answer to the suffering of the east.

This site made manifest by [dadalMC](#) software

Page executed in 0.36588907241821 seconds.

Loaded 54/76 class files. Read 4 objects from the database. Served 3 files from the cache.

Database access - select: 9

Database access - count: 4

Database access - update: 1